

From: Bryce Ryness
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/17/02 4:30am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Dear Judge,

As a business student at the University of Southern California I've had a little exposure to this case and the parties involved. And I must say that it is unfortunately that where there's a lot of money there's always a lot of gray- both in terms of legal and moral "right". With so much at stake a significant number of people will be hurt regardless of which side the decision favors. You control the fate of a lot of people. Your decision is one I do not wish on myself.

However, it has come to my attention that you're accepting statements of opinion to help you decide this case. Given such an opportunity, I will give you my synopsis of the situation and my opinions on the final judgements.

1. First and foremost, I feel that Microsoft is in violation of all applicable anti-trust laws. The most powerful evidence to this conclusion are the countless stories (and testimonies) given telling how Microsoft has used their size to "bully" smaller computer manufacturers into carrying their products (regardless of the wishes of the end-user). This kills the competitive spirit that keeps the United States' market economy alive and thriving.

2. In addition, their size and market dominance has allowed them to control the actions, and reactions, of their customers. Simple economics states that one of the characteristics of a monopolistic company is in that company's ability to control prices within their market. At this current time, I've heard nothing but support for Microsoft's "price-fixing" by expert economists. Granted, their "fixing" of prices for their generally-superior products is grossly subjective (how much does a piece of software cost, really?) in terms of dollars and cents, but the motivation and theory behind their pricing schemes shows the primary characteristics of a monopolistic company.

I applaud the efforts of the Department of Justice in putting Microsoft under the microscope. As history reveals to us, all too often monopolistic companies are only challenged when they've grown so big and have taken the industry into such a place of inefficiency that it's difficult to internally justify killing such a societal mainstay. However, you're on the right track by nipping this in the bud early. It makes your job tougher because the margins are smaller, but cleaning up this little mess early will save billions of dollars in the future.

Sincerely,
Bryce C. Ryness
Student, University of Southern California

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